

FACT SHEET

1. SUBJECT: Political Activities of Soldiers and DA Civilian Employees
2. PURPOSE: To provide guidance on the permissible and impermissible political activities of Soldiers and civilian employees.
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE SUBJECT: In general, both Soldiers and civilian employees alike should refrain from engaging in political activities while on duty, in uniform, in the federal workplace, or in a government vehicle and should not use government resources such as computers to forward political opinions, information, or articles. In addition, other restrictions apply based whether an individual is an active duty Soldier or a DA civilian employee.
4. RULES FOR DA CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES: Federal law known as the Hatch Act and related statutes and implementing regulations set forth the rules for civilian employees. In particular:
 - a. Civilian employees are AUTHORIZED to do the following (but not while on duty, in a Government office, building, or vehicle, or while using Government resources):
 - Be an active member of a political party or club.
 - Serve as an officer of a partisan political party or organization.
 - Campaign for or against candidates in partisan elections.
 - Serve as a delegate to a political convention.
 - Attend and participate in partisan political fundraising events or rallies.
 - Run for public office in non-partisan elections. (As a special exception, in Anchorage a civilian employee can also be a candidate for office in partisan elections provided the employee is running as an *independent*.)
 - Display political bumper stickers on personal vehicles.
 - Initiate or circulate partisan nominating petitions.
 - Canvas for votes.
 - Endorse or oppose a candidate in a political advertisement, broadcast, or campaign literature.
 - Address a political convention, caucus, or rally on behalf of a candidate.
 - Manage a political campaign.
 - Distribute campaign literature.
 - Act as a recorder, watcher, or challenger at a polling place.
 - Serve as an election judge or clerk.
 - Drive voters to a polling place.

- Make a financial political contribution.
- Attend, address, or be a featured guest at a political fundraiser (but refrain from soliciting contributions personally.)
- Manage or organize a political fundraiser hosted or sponsored by others.
- Solicit or receive uncompensated volunteer services in connection with a political fundraiser (but not from a subordinate or anyone with official matters before DoD.)

b. Civilian employees are **PROHIBITED** from doing the following:

- Participating in any of the above *authorized* political activities while on duty, in a Government office, building or vehicle, or while using Government resources.
- Using official titles in connection with political fundraising activities, including authorized political activities.
- Wearing political buttons while at work.
- Sending e-mails from government computers expressing political views, forwarding or posting newspaper articles or editorials about political candidates or issues.
- Soliciting or receiving political contributions, irrespective of whether it occurs in the federal workplace or not. This includes anonymously soliciting contributions over the telephone.
- Hosting or sponsoring a political fundraiser.

5. **RULES FOR SOLDIERS:** The rules for Soldiers are set out in Department of Defense Directive 1344.10 and Army Regulation 600-20. Generally, Soldiers are more restricted in the things they may do as compared to civilian employees.

a. Soldiers are **AUTHORIZED** to do the following:

- Promote and encourage other Soldiers to exercise their voting rights.
- Participate in the Federal Voting Assistance Program.
- Join partisan or nonpartisan political organizations and attend their meetings (*but not in uniform or during duty hours and can't hold a position in a political organization or be listed as a sponsor.*)
- Attend partisan and nonpartisan political fundraising activities, meetings, rallies, debates, conventions, or activities as a spectator when not in uniform and when no inference or appearance of official sponsorship, approval, or endorsement can reasonably be drawn.
- Make monetary contributions to a political organization.
- Sign a petition in one's personal capacity as a private citizen (not as a representative of the Army) for specific legislative action or a petition to place a particular candidate's name on the ballot.

- Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper expressing personal views provided it is not part of an organized letter-writing campaign or a solicitation of votes for or against a political party or partisan political cause or candidate and provided one's position title is not used when identifying oneself. If the letter identifies the writer as a service member on active duty, the letter should clearly state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not those of the Department of Defense.
- Display a political bumper sticker on their private vehicle.
- Register, vote, and express a personal opinion on political candidates and issues.
- Make monetary contributions to a political organization, party, or committee favoring a particular candidate or slate of candidates, subject to the limitations under [Title 2, US Code, Section 441a](#); [Title 18, US Code, Section 607](#); and other applicable law.

b. Soldiers are **PROHIBITED** from doing the following:

- Any of the items listed as prohibitions for DA civilian employees.
- Participating (i.e., more than mere attendance) in partisan political fundraising activities, rallies, conventions, management of campaigns, or debates.
- Speaking before a partisan political gathering or making public partisan political speeches.
- Soliciting campaign contributions from a military member or federal civilian employee or in federal offices or buildings. Making campaign contributions to, or receiving or soliciting contributions from, an active duty military member.
- Participate in radio, television, or other types of programs or group discussions advocating a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Write and publish partisan political articles, letters, or endorsements soliciting votes for or against a partisan political party, candidate, or cause.
- Serve in any capacity or being listed as a sponsor of a partisan political club.
- Distribute partisan political literature or conduct a political opinion survey under the auspices of a partisan political group.
- Marching or riding in a partisan political parade.
- Attending partisan political events as an official representative of the military (except as a member of a joint color guard at opening ceremonies of national political party conventions.)
- Displaying a large political sign, banner or poster (as opposed to a bumper sticker) on a private vehicle or at one's residence on a military installation (including privatized housing).
- Participating in any organized effort by a partisan political party or candidate to provide voters transportation to the polls.
- Selling tickets for or actively promoting political dinners and similar fundraising events.

6. **ACTION REQUIRED.** The Hatch Act carries stiff penalties for civilian employees (removal from federal employment) if violated. Supervisors should contact their Personnel Management Specialist in the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center if they have questions regarding permissible political activities and disciplinary action for violations. Military personnel who violate the restrictions on political activity are subject to possible adverse administrative action and/or disciplinary action under the UCMJ.

7. **REFERENCES.**

- a. 5 U.S.C. 7321-7325, The Hatch Act
- b. 5 C.F.R. Part 733, Political Activities of Federal Employees
- c. DoD Directive 1344.10, Political Activities by Members of the Armed Forces, 19 February 2008
- d. AR 600-20, Army Command Policy, 18 Mar 2008
- e. DoD 5500.7-R, Joint Ethics Regulation, 30 August 1993